

# **National Plantation Day-Relevance in Present Scenario**

**Dr. Prashant Kumar Sharma**

Lecturer in Botany, Govt. Lohia College, Churu, Rajasthan, India

**ABSTRACT:** The National Festival of Trees Planting (Van Mahotsav) in India is held annually from July 1 to July 7. Observance of this festival has an educational purpose as people learn to appreciate the great benefits that trees provide us - clean air, wildlife habitat, reducing energy demand and connecting with nature. He further said that the 'Van Mahotsav' festival of trees is a beautiful initiative to save the environment, to which we owe a lot. Van Mahotsav week is celebrated in the first week of July and plantation drives are carried out across the country. India has taken a target of creating additional 2 billion carbon sequestration. On Van Mahotsav, people plant saplings and encourage more people and various plantation drives are also carried out.

Van Mahotsav or Forest Festival is an annual tree-planting festival celebrated in the month of July in which thousands of trees are planted all over the country. Van Mahotsav week is celebrated from 1 July to 7 July to spread awareness of forest conservation and to save the environment. Trees and forests play a very crucial role in maintaining an ecological balance and providing oxygen to human beings on the planet. The Van Mahotsav week is a reminder that we must protect forests and stop deforestation and practice the 3R rule- Reduce, reuse and recycle.

**KEYWORDS:** National Plantation Day, India, Van Mahotsav, Forest, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Environment

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This is the Indian national tree planting week was organized by Mohinder Singh Randhawa from 20 to 27 July 1947. Randhawa had been inspired by ideas of a forest week, the festival of trees, or arbor days in various countries. The first event of 20 July 1947 was inaugurated with the planting of Bauhinia saplings by Khurshid Ahmad Khan, commissioner of Delhi in the morning and the afternoon, another ceremony was held at the Purana Qila led by the Vice President of the Interim Government, Nehru. Another day was called Ladies Day and involved planting at the Qutub Minar with participants including Lady Mountbatten. Nehru said that It was a matter of surprise to him that so far no interest had been taken in tree plantation. Large tracts of the country had become deserts owing to the negligence of the people who cut trees without realizing their great value. There should be a law that no one should cut a tree unless he had first planted a new one in its place.[1,2] Gandhi was in Delhi at the time and noted it in his prayer speech "The official who originated the idea of tree planting did not do it for fancy nor was it meant only for the monied men. It began with them so that others would copy them and thus add to the wealth and rainfall of India. Deforestation led to diminished rainfall. Moreover, trees required little care except in the early stages. An acre of land used for growing fruit trees would yield more fruit than a crop of wheat on the same area. The tradition was continued and made into a national activity in 1950 by the Minister of Food and Agriculture Kanaivalal Maneklal Munshi who moved it to the first week of July and renamed it as Van Mahotsav in 1950.

By encouraging Indians to support tree planting and tending, festival organizers hope to create more forests in the country. It would provide alternative fuels, increase production of food resources, create shelter-belts around fields to increase productivity, provide food and shade for cattle, offer shade and decorative landscapes, reduce drought, and help to prevent soil erosion. The first week of July is just the right time for planting trees in most parts of India since it coincides with the monsoon.

"Trees exhale for us so that we can inhale them to stay alive. Can we ever forget that? Let us love trees with every breath we take until we perish" said a well-known writer Munia Khan. Our country has so many festivals and mythological stories related to forests and trees. One of the most celebrated of them all is Van Mahotsav, a week-long celebration that is dedicated to Mother Earth in order to protect our life support system on the planet. Celebrated from

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July 1 through July 7, this week-long Mahotsav, aims at diverting attention towards the big issue, which undoubtedly is increasing deforestation.[3,4]

Delhi, being the capital of India takes this celebration a notch higher by turning wastelands into future green zones. Every year, as a part of this campaign, many afforestation drives are conducted in the city in order to spread community awareness about the ill effects of urbanization and globalization on nature. A large number of NGOs, government authorities along with the participation of school children mark the beautiful initiative. Children write Van Mahotsav slogans, plant saplings along with their teachers, and learn the importance of co-existing with nature.

## II. DISCUSSION

With the onset of the monsoon, tens and thousands of saplings are planted all across India and the festival literally is the celebration and creation of new life. Van Mahotsav was started back in the year 1950 by K.M. Munshi, who, back then, was a Union Minister for Agriculture and Food.

The main aim of this Mahotsav is to create enthusiasm and awareness amongst the masses. During this festival, each and every citizen of India is expected to plant a sapling during the entire Van Mahotsav week and pass it on to the next generation. [5,6]

Thankfully, the tradition and celebration continue to date and are being passed on to the next generation as well. The plantation of trees is well planned and generally, native saplings are planted as they readily adapt to the local conditions and have a higher rate of growing into a full-grown tree. The saplings and the funds are arranged and supplied by the government authorities, state and civic bodies to schools, colleges, NGOs, institutions, and other welfare organizations.

While Delhi celebrates the festival with full heart, Uttar Pradesh took home the crown of planting the most saplings during Van Mahotsav. All the 75 districts in the state planted more saplings than the actual target which was assigned to them. The state achieved a success rate of 114% by planting over 55 lakh trees surpassing their target of 48 lakh.

Tree plantation is the process of transferring of seedlings from one place to another for different purposes. Furthermore, there are various reasons behind tree plantation but the most important are forestry, land reclamation, and landscaping. Each process of tree plantation is important and unique in its own way. The most common and known purpose of tree plantation is forestry. The forest is very important for maintaining the ecological balance of the environment of the earth. Also, earlier the forest use to cover a major part of the surface of the earth. But, now due to the rapid cut down of forest due to industries, and land for settlement the number of forests has reduced.[7,8]

Apart from that, the forest grows naturally but in order to increase the speed of reforestation, our contribution is a must for it. Also, it will help the forest to recover from the loss due to deforestation. Furthermore, with our help, the pace of tree plantation can be increased. We do this type of plantation in cities or urban areas. Most of these areas lack trees and plants. Besides, tree plantation makes these areas worth living for. Also, it makes the atmosphere of the city more tolerable. In addition, it renders a good feeling and makes the place worth living. It is the easiest way to beautify the surrounding. Trees are often planted on the parks, gardens, roadside, societies, and garden of our home for the purpose of reforming. Besides, it does not only make the surrounding beautiful but also provides various other benefits and helps in beating the heat. Many NGOs and organizations have volunteered for tree plantation. It is one of the easiest and quickest ways to spread greenery in the world. Also, people around the world have always contributed to this cause from time to time. In addition, many have a set of communities and workgroups that works towards making the earth green and a better place to live. Furthermore, these organizations not only engage themselves in plantation activities. But, also in spreading awareness among the people and asking them to join the cause. Moreover, with the arrival of social media, it has become a massive platform to promote these causes. Also, they are helpful in spreading knowledge about the importance of tree plantation.[9,10]

## III. RESULTS

The support of the government is also a must for making the environment cleaner and greener. Because NGOs and social groups lack funds to propagate these causes but with the help of government they can easily do it. Also, the government should support this cause wholeheartedly to advance. Because the organization is working to make the nation a better place. With the help of the government, these organizations can perform their projects at a much bigger level than they are doing now. To conclude, the time has come for us to realize the importance of tree plantation. Also, it is our duty to contribute to

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tree plantation. In addition, the government must take this matter seriously and should start working towards involving more and more people to advance the cause. "A tree is the best friend of man on earth." When we use trees respectfully and economically, we have one of the greatest resources on earth. Trees are rightfully called the 'lungs of the earth.' Life on earth would cease to exist in the absence of trees. Trees are responsible for sustaining the environment in several ways. Trees release life-supporting oxygen and absorb harmful gases like carbon dioxide during the process of photosynthesis. They act as sponges by taking in toxic emissions and other pollutants, released into the atmosphere by industries and vehicles. The roots of trees bind the soil together thereby preventing erosion. The blatant and increased rate of deforestation is the primary cause of landslides. In addition to being the bearers of delicious fruits, trees are the natural habitat of several species of animals, birds, and insects. [11,12] Thus, the destruction of a tree implies the destruction of an entire ecosystem. We have inherited this planet with its many resources, from our ancestors. The onus rests on us to protect the earth's fragile ecosystem, so that future generations have a place they can call home. It is indeed ironic that despite being at the top of the food chain Homo Sapiens are intent on destroying the very things that guarantee their survival. However, there is a silver lining. The situation can be remedied by restoring the earth's green cover and taking concrete measures to reduce carbon emissions. Let's all take a vow to go green and save the earth from destruction.

Trees are the most benevolent givers in nature. They play an extremely important role in giving life and sustaining it, as a whole, as well as maintaining a balance in the eco-system. This makes it crucial for us to understand how significant trees are to our life on earth and what we can do to counter the problem of their depleting numbers and all the additional challenges that come with it.

Trees play an extremely important part in regulating the temperature and making the weather conditions conducive to rainfall. They take in carbon dioxide from the air, thereby purifying it, and release oxygen, which is essential to the sustenance of life. Moreover, they also provide us with wood, food, fuel, paper, etc, which are an important part of our daily lives. Furthermore, they are home to all kinds of animals and birds as well. Deforestation is a major reason behind the climate change crisis that we are facing today. Not only has it led to the occurrence of numerous natural calamities, but it has also resulted in the severe depletion and extinction of many species of flora and fauna. It is high time that we took the responsibility for our actions. We need to give back to the earth and take care of her the same way she has been taking care of us for so long. We need to plant as many trees as possible to make our earth beautiful and green again. [13]

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

"Plant a tree today for a better tomorrow." The significance of forest cover and tree plantation cannot be stressed upon enough, and their importance has only increased in the present scenario, with global warming and climate change being very real threats to our planet and all its inhabitants. Tree plantation refers to the transplantation of saplings or sowing of seeds in order to facilitate green cover and promote afforestation. Tree plantation can be a very fulfilling and fruitful activity! Not only is it good for the environment and the earth, but it is also a way in which you can help in making the world a better and cleaner place to live in, as trees help to bring down the levels of pollution. [14,15]

The advantages of planting trees are manifold, such as:

### 1. Trees are Home to All Manner of Flora and Fauna

The earth is home to not just us but trees as well, and trees, in turn, are home to a variety of birds and animals such as monkeys, koalas, owls, tree frogs, pythons, etc. So, by erasing trees from the face of the earth and destroying green cover, we are destroying the homes of all these creatures as well. Moreover, trees also provide these creatures with food in the form of leaves and fruits, which is even more reason to preserve them.

Cutting these trees results in the destruction of the natural habitat of these animals, leading to consequences as dire and disastrous as the diminishing of their populations or in the worst-case scenario, even the extinction of all these

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beautiful creatures. This is why it is imperative that we plant trees to maintain the ecological balance and ensure harmony in our biodiversity.

## **2. Growth of Forest Cover Leads to Growth in Economy**

Trees are an indispensable part of our lives because they provide us with so many things that are essential for us. Everything, right from rubber, wood and paper to fruits and vegetables is provided to us by trees. Without trees, we would not have houses and other buildings, paper to write on, or even food. All these products that we obtain from trees are bought and sold and play a major role in the domestic as well as the international economy. Therefore, it is important to note that promoting afforestation will promote and boost the economy as well.

## **3. Planting trees can Help Combat the Negative Impact of Deforestation**

All relationships are about giving and taking, even our relationship with the earth. It is only fair that we plant more trees to make up for the ones we cut, so as to maintain the ecological balance and natural harmony. Planting trees is the only way to make sure that our planet's green cover is not wiped out completely.

Trees give us life. It is time that we gave back to nature. It is time that we nurture the earth now and tree plantation would be a great leap forward in this endeavor.

## **The Significance of Tree Plantation – 500 Words Essay on Tree Plantation**

Trees are the embodiment of life itself. Not only do they give life, but they also sustain it as well by providing us and all other living creatures with two things that are essential for the sustenance of life, which are oxygen and food. Moreover, they also provide shelter and food to birds and animals and give us wood, paper, etc., that are an integral part of our daily lives.

Did you know that trees also work as air-purifiers? They play the role of filters in our ecosystem by absorbing harmful gases from the air and bringing down the levels of pollution. In addition to all this, they help in maintaining the balance in our ecological system and make conditions conducive to rainfall, thereby ensuring that life flourishes. They take in the carbon dioxide present in the air, thereby regulating the temperature and making it cooler and more pleasant.

Unfortunately, however, despite the fact that trees are probably the most benign beings on the planet and do nothing but give of themselves to everyone and everything around them, we have shown them no mercy. Deforestation is a huge environmental concern now, and a big reason behind the climate change crisis we are facing today. However, with environmental activists passionately fighting for the cause, awareness about the negative impact of deforestation has increased. That being said, it is only fair that we give back to the earth now by planting trees to right the wrongs committed by us. It is the only way to restore the earth to her earlier green glory and save ourselves from any natural disasters in the future.[16]

Now, this is not to say that people haven't made attempts to right their wrongs in the past. In fact, the Chipko Movement was a great example of people coming together to save trees and encourage people to plant trees, and by extension save the earth. With the rising awareness about the importance of planting trees and the positive impact it will have on the environment, the Govt. has taken the initiative and issued funds and equipment for tree plantation, while also carrying out projects to plant trees in areas that are devoid of green cover.

In conclusion, it would not be wrong to say that the reason we are facing the climate change problem today is that we could not and did not realize the value of trees and appreciate them for everything they do, yesterday. But it is never too late to make amends. We can make things better by planting more trees and facilitating afforestation. We have done nothing but take from nature for so long. It is high time we gave back to the earth and there is no time like the present to do a good deed and make the earth a clean, green, and beautiful place to live in once again. After all, the future

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generations must inherit the earth in the same condition it was left to us, if not better. We owe it to them to make the world a healthy, happy, and safe place to live in.

## The Importance of Planting Trees – 1000 Words Essay on Tree Plantation

The importance of promoting tree plantation cannot be stressed enough. It has been aptly stated that “People who will not sustain trees will soon live in a world that will not sustain people”. A world without trees is akin to a barren desert with no life. All forms of life on earth are interdependent and one cannot hope to exist without the other. Preservation of all-natural resources is imperative for the balance of our ecosystem. Hence the need to promote tree plantation on a war footing.

Trees benefit us in numerous ways. They absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen during the process of photosynthesis. This helps in combating climate change. Studies have shown that an acre of trees can absorb the same amount of carbon dioxide produced by a car that has been driven for twenty-six thousand miles. Strong healthy trees act as carbon sinks, absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide and reducing the effects of climate change. Also, in a year an acre of mature trees can provide oxygen for eighteen people. By absorbing pollutants like sulfur dioxide, ammonia, and nitrogen oxide, trees play a huge part in purifying the air. Tree canopies act as physical filters by trapping dust and absorbing pollutants from the air.

Trees help cool the environment, thereby conserving energy by reducing the need for air conditioning. Streets and cities with a larger green cover are significantly cooler as compared to those without. Ultraviolet rays are known to be the leading cause of skin cancer. Trees shield against UV rays by 50%.

Trees play an important part in conserving water. The shade from trees slows down the rate of water evaporation from lawns, gardens, etc. Trees also help in preventing water pollution. They reduce runoff by breaking rainfall, thus allowing water to flow into the earth. They act like sponges that filter rainwater and recharge the groundwater table. Moreover, trees play an important part in the water cycle and control the moisture level of the ecosystem. Tree plantation has a major role to play in preventing soil erosion. The roots of trees bind the soil, thus preventing it from getting washed away during rains.

Trees are a source of food and wood, both of which help promote the economy of the region. The forest industry provides ample job opportunities. Additionally, sustainable tree farming provides timber to build homes and wood for cooking and heating. Trees are also a habitat and sanctuary for many species of birds, animals, and insects. When young, they provide shelter to birds, insects, lichen, and fungi. The trunks of ancient trees can host owls, bats, and beetles, to name a few tree-dwelling species. Thus, trees are unique hosts of complex microhabitats.[17]

The power to heal is inherent in nature. Research has shown that exposure to nature improves concentration and reduces mental fatigue. Children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder have been found to show improvement when they have access to nature. Studies have also shown that within minutes of being surrounded by trees and green spaces, BP drops, heart rate slows and stress levels reduce.

Unfortunately, in our bid to modernize and progress we have been systematically destroying forests and depleting the earth's resources. The history of deforestation dates back centuries. During earlier times, it was balanced through a natural growth process as tree cutting was done for personal or community use only. But with the expansion of agriculture, forest lands started being cleared. Destruction increased after the industrial revolution and the urbanization and commercial exploitation that began during the colonial period was the main cause of deforestation. The consequences of all that mindless destruction are now there, for all to see- global warming, erratic weather patterns, increase in the frequency and volume of, floods, melting of glaciers, desertification of once fertile area, loss of soil productivity, extinction of several species, imbalance in the ecosystem and nonavailability of forest products. Franklin D.Roosevelt very rightly said, “A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people”. It is essential to remember this truth if we are to prevent more species including ourselves from becoming extinct.



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Many countries across the world are beginning to realize the importance of afforestation. Several local bodies, private citizens and non-governmental organizations are working tirelessly to mitigate the damage inflicted over the years. In India, tree planting is usually carried out during the monsoons, which is from June to September. Van Mahotsav or Tree Plantation Day is celebrated during the first week of July every year. There are a number of steps that can be taken to conserve forests. Cutting down of trees can be regulated using methods like clear-cutting, selective cutting, and shelter cutting. Large scale commercial deforestation should be avoided. Forest fires can destroy large tracts of green cover. Measures should be taken to avoid forest fires. These include making fire lanes, clearing dry leaves and trees, and spreading chemicals to control fires. Also, better farming practices can be adopted. It is necessary to avoid slash and burn farming, overgrazing by cattle, and shifting agriculture. The concept of national parks and game sanctuaries have become popular over the past years. This method of developing forests as tourist centers can not only protect forests but also earn foreign exchange. Several countries have developed their forests as tourist centers.

Before embarking on a plantation drive it is important to keep a few things in mind. The type of trees to be planted depends on the topography and climate of the area. It is preferable to plant indigenous species as they are better suited to the local habitat. Also, this helps preserve traditional flora.

This is the ideal time when people must realise the significance of plantation and contribute to it. The government must take this issue seriously and more and more individuals must work to pursue this essential objective.[17]

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